3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

241 The Shulla has not yet learned to grow a very large variety of plants. His one main crop is dura, the kaffir corn of America.

[227] All planting except tobacco, which is planted in small plots on the river bank during the dry season and watered by sprinkling the ground from a water [249] jar, is done in the beginning of the rainy season.

A small amount of Indian corn is grown, most of which is eaten when in hard roasting ear. With the dura they plant a few beans, pumpkins, squashes, sesame and occasionally peanuts. No fruits of any kind are grown, and as [245] there are no wild fruits worthy the name, the Shulla has never known fruit until he has recently seen it in our garden or at the government stations.

The Shulla plants his dura in the same field year after year, until his crop fails once or twice. Then he hunts for a piece of high dry ground, preferably in the timber, for his early dura, and a low plain growing a certain rank wild grass for his late variety. He clears off the timber and digs up the grass for his new field which he tills, till another failure comes; if by that time his former field is growing of grass, he will return to its tillage.

His methods of farming are extremely crude, but in some respects accomplish good results. He has neither plough nor spade and never uses the mattock except to dig up the grass and bushes from new ground.

He prepares his ground by raking up the old stalks into piles with a deleib palm limb and burning them.

As soon as the rainy season opens and sufficient rain has fallen to soften the ground, he puts his seed to soak over night, so it will sprout the quicker, and thus more likely escape being eaten by white ants. With a long slender pole [412] which has one end shaped like the bowl of a spoon, he opens up the ground, and drops in the seeds. As he steps forward to make another hole, he presses down the earth over the seed with his foot. The hills are made promiscuously, but are usually some eighteen inches apart in all directions. He plants a large number of seeds in a hill, and later thins out and transplants where hills are missing.

Often he has to replant, for there are many enemies of the sprouting grain. Some years pests of rats devour it, even after it is several inches high. The golden-crested crane also pulls up much of the grain as it comes through the ground. And as before mentioned the white ant destroys the grain in the ground unless it sprouts quickly. But under normal conditions the grain comes up very soon after planting. And the warm rains and tropical sun cause the crop to shoot up like Johnnie's bean pole. Weeds come on quickly too, and so the Shulla begins hoeing his fields at once. It is the only real cultivation he does. [412] His hoe is either a thin circular or rectangular piece of iron with a short wooden handle.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

797 123 would proceed somewhat in this fashion. I would plan an itinerary to take in half-a-dozen villages covering an area of two square miles or so, and from the mission books or my own notes decide on what had to be done. Augustine, living in Detwok, for example, had not sent in his pagan wife for instruction as he had promised; another gentle prodding would be necessary there. In Debalo I might find Julian, and it would be as well to investigate the report that he had begun negotiations for marriage with a pagan girl; I must find out how far matters have gone and how many head of cattle have been paid, and warn him to send the girl into the mission in good time so that she might be instructed and baptized and the marriage celebrated in church. Thomas in Pabiu has inherited his brother's wife, so I had better look him up and find out what he intends to do about it. And while I am there I shall make a point of calling to see old Rachael, a good woman who has been ill for a long time now; she has already received the last Sacraments and is waiting for our Lord to call her from this weary world, weary [164] indeed for her for she is a leper and blind as well; a few cheerful words and the gift of a screw of tobacco will help to relieve the tedium of a long day. In Othicogo there is another sick woman whom I ought to visit; the Sisters have been taking care of her and instructing her, as she is a pagan; perhaps it might be prudent now to baptize her. Also there is that young villain Paul who ran away from school last week; his father must be persuaded to send him back again. And that reminds me that in the next village lives Frederick, who assured the Superior that he would send his children to school, but has not done so; he must be given a sharp reminder of the duties of Christian parents towards their children. My list of calls thus planned, I pack my sick-[249 276] call case into the cycle bag, break off a few pieces of native grown tobacco from a lump like a brick, and just as hard and appetizing looking, and stuff them into my pocket, mount my cycle and bump off across country towards the main road and the line of villages.

My entrance to the first village is greeted by a cacophony